

Myrtleford P12 College

COVID-19 Policy 2021 4th October onwards

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline to parents, carers and students how our school will be managing risk and other operational matters relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Myrtleford P12 College is committed to providing a safe learning and working environment for our students and staff. We ask for all members of the school community to follow this policy to enable us to provide the safest possible environment during this time. We all have a role to play in stopping the spread of COVID-19 in Victoria.

Background

Myrtleford P12 College is following the advice from the Department of Education and Training which can be found on the Department's website at: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

Scope

This policy applies to everyone in the Myrtleford P12 College community. This includes all members of staff (principals, teachers and education support staff), all parents/carers who interact with the school and all students. It also includes visitors to the school. Information specific to staff only and not relevant to students and their families is not included in this policy.

Details

Information on changes to on-site learning will be provided to parents and families via the school newsletter, Compass and Skoolbag App.

Priorities

We will continue to have in place strong measures to protect the health and safety of students, staff, families and the community. In addition to the health and safety measures outlined in this policy, we will be focused on three key priorities:

Mental health and wellbeing

Our highest priority will be the wellbeing, particularly the mental health, of every student and member of staff. This means effectively mobilising all available resources to support our most vulnerable students and enabling staff to access the relevant support services.

Learning and excellence

Some of our students have thrived in the remote and flexible learning environment, others have maintained their learning progress, and some have fallen behind, despite their best efforts and those of their families and teachers. Our priority will be supporting both those who need help to catch up and those who have continued to extend their learning.

Transitions

We will make every effort to ensure successful transitions for children moving from kindergarten into Prep, the Grade 6s moving into Year 7, the Year 12s moving into employment or further education and training.

Health and safety at school

Our school follows the Department and Victorian Chief Health Officer's advice and requirements in relation to health and safety. The health and safety measures relating to students are outlined below. These health and safety measures are regularly reviewed in line with the changing context of COVID-19 in Victoria. As a result, some measures may no longer be required and/or new measures may be introduced. This means:

Unwell students (including students who have been tested)

- Unwell students **must** stay home.
- Where students have been tested for coronavirus (COVID-19) they are required to isolate at home and must not attend school.

Managing unwell students at school

- Students engaging in on-site learning experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19), such as fever, cough or sore throat, will be isolated in an appropriate space with suitable supervision and collected by a parent/carer as soon as possible. Urgent medical attention will be sought where needed. Unwell students will not be permitted to travel home unsupervised.
- Where staff or students are experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus, we will ensure hand hygiene, physical distancing and use of a face covering. See DET [guidance for the use of Personal Protective Equipment in education](#).
- [Where students with complex health needs are being supported: In the context of schools supporting students with complex health needs, if the care of an unwell child or young person is to be prolonged (for example, because it will take some hours for a parent to collect a child) and maintaining distance is not practical when providing direct care, gloves, gown and eye protection will be considered.
- Health care plans, where relevant, should be updated to provide additional advice on monitoring and identification of the unwell child in the context of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- If a staff member is unsure whether a student is unwell in the first instance we will contact the parent/carer to discuss any concerns about the health status of the student, and we will take a precautionary approach, requesting the parent/carer to collect their child if concerns remain. A trained staff member may take the temperature of the student, where appropriate, to support decision-making.
- Parent/carers of students experiencing compatible symptoms with coronavirus (COVID-19) will be encouraged to seek the advice of their healthcare professional who can advise on next steps. Students should not return to school until symptoms resolve.
- If a student spreads droplets (for example by sneezing, coughing or vomiting), surfaces will be immediately cleaned with disinfectant.

Managing a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19

The Department has comprehensive procedures in place with the Department of Health and Human Services to manage suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in schools. In accordance with these procedures:

- We will contact the Department of Health and Human Services on 1300 651 160 to seek advice if a student or staff member:
 - is a confirmed case
 - has been in close contact with a confirmed case
- We will inform the Department's Incident Support and Operations Centre who will support the school to make an [IRIS incident alert](#).

DHHS defines 'close contact' as someone who has either:

- had at least 15 minutes of face-to-face contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- shared a closed space for more than two hours with someone who is a confirmed case.

Face coverings

- **Guidance for the wearing of face mask at school (inclusive of staff, students, visitors and contractors) will be altered as per the guidelines issued by the Victorian Chief Health officer and the current DEECD School Operations Guide.**
- **This will be communicated to the school community via Compass and/or Skoolbag as changes occur.**

Physical distancing

- Wherever possible we will encourage and support physical distancing of students however the Department and Victorian Chief Health Officer has acknowledged that physical distancing in schools is practicably difficult to achieve and has not mandated this practice. Parents and visitors are asked to observe physical distancing requirements (1.5 metres) and density limitations as signed in areas of the school.

Hand, food and drink hygiene

- Hand sanitiser will be available at entry points to classrooms and students will be educated on the importance of this health and safety measure
- All people on school grounds must undertake regular hand hygiene, particularly on arrival to school, before and after eating, after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing or using the toilet.
- Where shared equipment is necessary, students will be required to exercise strict hand hygiene before and after use.
- Students must not share their food.

Temperature checks

- Mandatory temperature testing of all students is no longer required. However, we will continue to heed Department and Chief Health Officer advice on this, and temperature checks may be reintroduced if the current levels of community transmission in Victoria increase.

Mobile phones

- The Department and school's mobile phone policies continue to apply and we ask that students and staff clean their phones regularly.

Attendance

Normal attendance notification requirements apply for all students, including students undertaking remote learning from home. Please refer to our school Attendance Policy for further information.

Exceptions to attendance may exist for medically vulnerable students. The Acting Deputy Chief Health Officer has advised that decisions regarding school attendance should be informed by the nature of a child or young person's condition, its severity and intensity of required treatment. In most cases, the presence of common conditions of childhood, such as asthma, epilepsy or Type 1 diabetes, should not preclude a student from attending face-to-face learning.

In keeping with expert public health advice, some students may be at higher risk for severe outcomes or complications of coronavirus (COVID-19), for example those with chronic medical conditions. Any student with a chronic medical condition should seek advice from their medical practitioner about attending school on site at different stages in the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Please also contact Principal Zlatko Pear for further support and advice on how we can support your child in these circumstances.

Our school records student attendance in accordance with the Department's [Attendance Policy](#).

School assemblies

The current Department School Operations Guide will set out guidance on whether School Assemblies are possible at the time. This will be communicated to parents and the school community as necessary.

Camps, excursions, sport and recreation

The current School Operations Guide will set out information on camps, excursions, sport and recreation. Further information on any camps and excursions will be provided separately to the relevant year group.

Playground equipment can currently be used by students. However students should practise hand hygiene before and after use. Changes may occur and will be implemented as per the Department's current School Operations Guide guidelines.

Hand hygiene is required before and after use of any sporting equipment.

Instrumental classes and food technology

- Food preparation can continue with frequent hand hygiene and no sharing of food.

Canteen

Our school canteen will operate with the highest hygiene practices. The canteen will be open on Monday, Thursday and Friday. Any changes to the canteen operating times will be communicated to parents and families.

Visitors and school tours

There are currently restrictions on visitors to school sites. The current School Operations Guide will be consulted to ensure the current guidelines are followed.

Currently, this means:

- Only essential visitors are allowed on site. However, parents are permitted to enter the site to pick up/drop off students or for any official College business, but they are not permitted to congregate, must social distance and follow all requirements for the wearing of face masks

- To support contact tracing, visitors will be required to use the QR code check in available at school entrances when entering school buildings, and they will also be required to sign in at the front office if they attend the school for longer than 15 minutes. Parents are asked to attend the site for the minimal time necessary.
- These restrictions will be communicated to the College community via Compass and Skoolbag.

School buses for on-site students

The School Bus Program will continue to operate as normal.

Students should practice hand hygiene before and after catching any form of public or school transport.

Physical distancing should be practised by both parents and students at bus stops.

Students need to adhere to the Chief medical officer's directive on the wearing of face masks whilst on school buses.

Outside school hours care

Outside School Hours Care will be available for students in accordance with their usual process.

Interschool activities

Myrtleford P12 College will follow all advice for suspending interschool activities provided by the Chief Medical Officer as set out in the Department's current School Operations Guide.

Restrictions may include:

- spectators to be discouraged or to be within public gathering limits
- reinforce hand hygiene before, during and after
- attendance register maintained to support contact tracing
- no sharing of food (such as oranges at sport)
- Cleaning and disinfection of communal facilities prior to and after an interschool sport event (toilets and communal changerooms can open).

Information on Year 10, 11 and 12 students attending VCE and VCAL subjects at Marian College will be provided separately.

Communication between parents/carers and our school

Parents and carers are encouraged to contact their child's teacher to discuss any concerns or areas of need in regards to their child's learning, health, wellbeing or access to teaching and learning resources.

Cleaning and facilities management

Additional cleaning arrangements will continue in line with public advice set out in the School Operations guide.

At our school we will:

- Continue extension of routine environmental cleaning, which involves daily end-of-school day cleaning, with a particular focus on cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces, and the inclusion of some elements that were not cleaned daily prior to the COVID 19 pandemic.
- The use of shared equipment will be carefully monitored. We will be practising hand hygiene immediately before and after use of shared equipment.

Further information and resources

- DET Coronavirus (COVID-19) website:
 - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/Pages/coronavirus-advice-schools.aspx>
- DHHS Coronavirus (COVID-19) website:
 - <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>
- DET Infectious Diseases Policy:
 - <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/infectious-diseases/policy>
- DET Health Care Needs Policy:
 - <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/health-care-needs/policy>
- Talking to your child about COVID-19:
 - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/department/covid-19/talking-to-your-child-during-coronavirus.docx>
- Department of Education and Training COVID-19 Advice Line – 1800 338 663
- Department of Health and Human Services Coronavirus hotline – 1800 675 398 (24 hours, 7 days a week)

Review

This policy was last updated on 4th October 2021 and will be reviewed on a regular basis as the situation changes.

Changes made on 28 th April 2021
Throughout- Terms changed to 2021 P5- Addition of QR Code facility
Changes made on 25 th Nov
P3-Face coverings P4-Indoor sports P5- Interschool Sport
<u>Changes made on 25th Jan 2021</u>
<u>Date changes made throughout document</u> <u>P3-Face coverings and density limits</u> <u>P4-School assemblies, sport and recreation activities, camps and excursions</u> <u>P5- Visitors, school bus travel</u> <u>P6- Cleaning</u>
Changes made on 13 th July – as highlighted
P3-Face coverings P4-School assemblies, Camps and Excursions, Sport and Recreation, visitors P5- School buses, interschool activities
Changes made on 17 th August
P4-School assemblies, Camps and Excursions, Sport and Recreation, visitors
Changes made on 4 th October
Removal of some dates, addition of ‘families’, general changes to referencing DET guidelines. P5 QR code check in guidance